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11 February 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Inspector General

ATTENTION :

[REDACTED]

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SUBJECT :

REDUCTION IN CABLE TRAFFIC

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1. At our meeting on 8 February 1954, I agreed to prepare in draft form the Agency notice (Field and Headquarters) explaining the short-term and long-term constructive approach to reducing cable traffic. At that time, I had not had an opportunity to study the proposal carefully, and I had not read the comments of the other members of the Ad Hoc Committee. Subsequent to that time, I have studied the draft paper and the comments of the other members very carefully. I believe that the subject has been well covered in the draft study and I concur generally in the findings. I do not believe, however, that any further notice should be issued over Mr. Dulles' signature at this time. Rather, I suggest we implement specific plans by which we can comply with his 17 April 1953 directive. If all possible means result in failure, then it may be necessary to issue some new directive in the name of the Director.

2. The Director, on 17 April 1953, stated that the Department of State had initiated a program requiring a 25 percent reduction in the number of cabled messages as well as a similar reduction in total cabled words or group count, and indicated that it was "imperative that a similar reduction be made in CIA cable traffic". He also directed the Assistant Director for Communications to maintain records on the progress of the reduction effort in order to determine if the voluntary reduction plan set forth was adequate to achieve the desired goal. According to [REDACTED] summary of total volume, the Agency, after months of voluntary effort, has failed to achieve the desired reduction.

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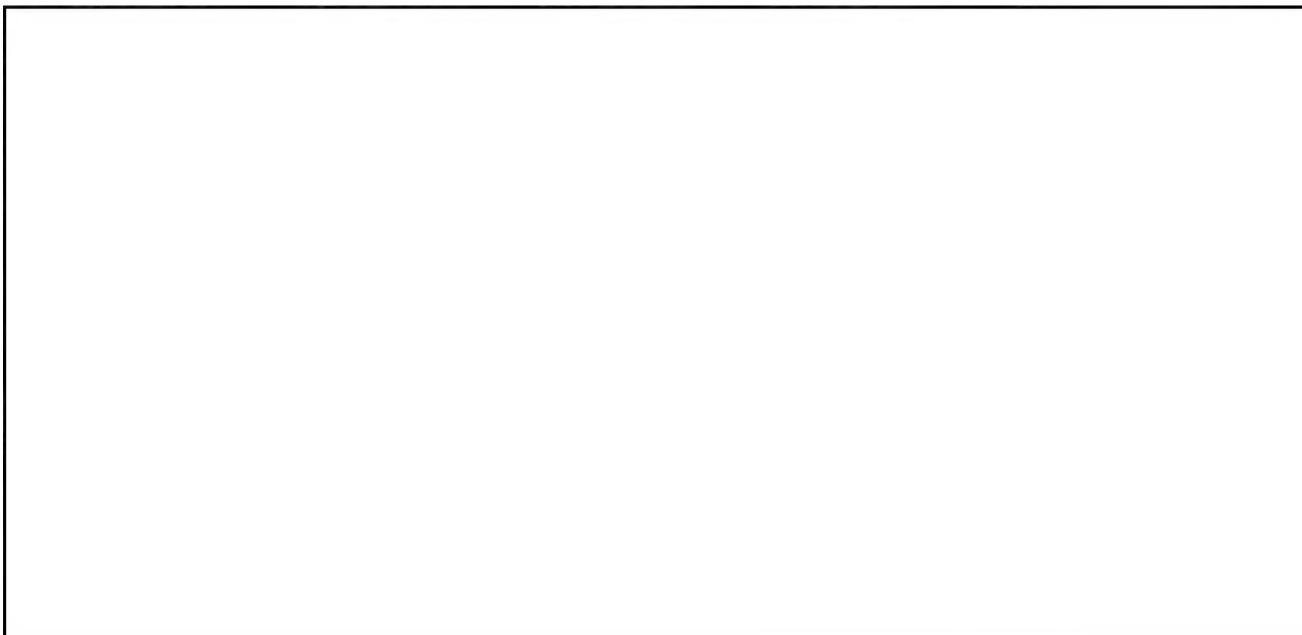
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3. It seems to me that the Director should be informed that a voluntary reduction has failed to achieve the desired reduction and that there is little likelihood that a continued voluntary effort will ever achieve the desired reduction. If he desires that such a reduction be effected, voluntary or otherwise, and for the purposes of this paper I presume he will, then the following courses of action are open: (all of these have been recognized by the Committee and are set forth here merely for the sake of discussion)

- (a) Diversion of cables to pouch channels
- (b) Reduction of the number of "info" addressees on cables
- (c) Establish suggested maximum quotas
- (d) Improved techniques in cable writing
- (e) Increased use of standard abbreviations
- (f) Written justification for every cable

4. Based on my daily review of all CIA cables, my comments on the effectiveness of each of the above means are as follows:



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(b) Reduction of the Number of "Info" Addressees on Cables

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According to [ ] information addressees represent approximately 40% of the volume of cable traffic. It appears that this category offers the greatest opportunity for achieving a major reduction with the least possible ill effects. As in Paragraph 4 (a)

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that from that study, a new policy be evolved covering the inclusion of "info" addressees on cables. As stated by [ ] "In many instances, it appears that promiscuous "info" addressing brings little or no return from some of the addressees yet by cable etiquette and procedure any answer by any recipient must be addressed to all addressees as stipulated by the originator of the message being acted upon." As suggested by Mr. [ ] instructions could be included on each policy and administrative cable originated within Headquarters to the effect that dissemination of the information in whole or in part is to be at the discretion of the Senior Representative. These instructions would be in lieu of the "info" addressees on this particular category of cable. [ ] now out for formal coordination, provides for pouching copies of cables to "info" addressees.

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(c) Establish Suggested Quotas

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given a suggested maximum or target quota in terms of words which he should endeavor to keep within for each month. This quota would be 75% of the word count for the month of April, the month in which the Director asked for the 25% reduction. The Office of Communications should then inform DD/P weekly of the total word count for each of the [REDACTED] for the expired portion of the current month. The reporting could be reduced or discontinued after the stations and Foreign Divisions had reached the suggested ceilings. Obviously, there would be no thought of denying needed cable facilities for those who had exceeded the suggested quotas. It is quite possible, however, that this means of "follow through" by reference to actual word count would have a salutary effect in achieving the desired reduction. At least, it represents a specific target and provides all concerned with a specific goal.

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(d) Improved Techniques of Cable Writing

The technique of writing cables in which brevity and clarity are paramount factors is dependent upon all cable writers being thoroughly trained. This is a mass education approach which offers an opportunity to improve style, and to achieve greater clarity and brevity through the use of more precise terms and expressions. It is a long-term approach, however, and in terms of potential reduction in words, does not warrant first priority by any means. I feel that our cables are, on the whole, exceedingly well written, both in the Field and in Headquarters. Our cable writers are to be commended. I estimate that approximately a 1 to 2% reduction in word count can be achieved by this means. However, I concur in the need for this reduction, and this office is now preparing a Cable Handbook to meet this specific need. The Cable Handbook cannot be published until [REDACTED] is published. This Regulation has been in the process of getting final coordination since October.

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(e) Increased Use of Standard Abbreviations

My comments here are much the same as for (d) above---there is room for long-term improvement, and we are going after that improvement, but the potential saving through the use of abbreviations

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is far too small to be considered a means of achieving a 25% reduction in cable traffic. As implied previously, what we need to eliminate is whole cables, specifically, to eliminate one out of every four cables, or one out of every four words. We cannot hope to achieve such a major reduction through the use of abbreviations. However, I do propose to publish, as part of the Cable Handbook, a section on abbreviations. Until that time, and until the whole matter of abbreviations has been discussed in greater detail with the Foreign Divisions and coordinated with the Office of Communications, I am opposed to publishing a list at this time which restricts the writer to those abbreviations included on the list. As suggested abbreviations, I have no objection to the publication of such a list.

(f) Written Justification for Every Cable

It is possible that by requiring written justification for every cable the originator would be forced to give thought to whether his case need be handled by cable, or might be handled by dispatch. While I do not personally like the idea of imposing additional work on those already burdened, this method does offer one additional means of discouraging cable traffic, and should perhaps be given further consideration.

5. In summary, I believe that we shall continue to fail to achieve a 25% reduction in cable traffic so long as we approach it on a voluntary basis. I do not think that the man in the Field nor the releasing officer in Headquarters has at this time the necessary guidance to enable him to determine what matters now being handled by cable could, without possible repercussions, be handled by pouch. If we are to achieve a 25% reduction in traffic [redacted] it will necessarily be done by direction and it will necessarily involve a new concept of what must go by cable and what can go pouch. The persons responsible for originating cables and those responsible for releasing cables must be given additional guidance, and that guidance must evolve from a new and radically different concept of the importance of "info" addressees being kept informed by cable. This new concept must come from DD/P, as the one most concerned with operational cables; it is suggested that it be based initially upon a thorough study of a sample of current cables to and from [redacted]

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Cable Secretary

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